

THE AESTHETIC POTENTIAL OF THE ELEMENT OF
EARTH

THE ELEMENTS—TOWARDS THE SOURCE OF CREATIVE IMAGINATION

While trying to explain the source of human creative power one can find it inspiring and helpful to reconsider the very beginnings of cosmogonic reflection, regarded as a search for the ideal pattern of each and every creative act, both human and divine. Apart from the ideas of overcoming chaos and the separation of the sky from the earth, a conception of joining together or realising the creative energy out of the primordial elements that constitute the world is one of the most common and influential cosmogonic figures. However, it is hardly possible to elucidate a simultaneous appearance of this idea in ancient Indian, Chinese and Greek traditions as early as 600 BC. Some time later a unique capacity and attractiveness of this conception was fully proved, above all, by the alchemists. No matter which historical period we discuss, a *holistic approach* to all domains of life and a tendency to perceive both living and inanimate forms of nature as a harmonious unity, one which undergoes constant inner fluctuations and transformations, always accompanied the idea of the elements.

The lists of the gross elements differ in detail from one conception to another; nevertheless, "earth," which is the central concept of the present paper, is repeated in each of them. The oldest evidence for developing a philosophical conception using this motif is associated with Anaximander (c. 611–547 BC), the famous disciple of Thales. He was the first who mentioned four elements beginning with the densest, earth, and proceeding through water and air up to the most mobile, fire, all of which, one after another emerged from the mixture of warm and cold distinguished within the *arché*, recognized as being non-limited (*ápeiron*).¹ From enigmatic aphorisms ascribed to Heraclitus we can infer an image of the liquidity and flexibility of all elementary transformations: Fire, as the ancient sage taught, lives thanks to the death of earth; air—thanks to the death of fire; water—thanks to the death of air; and earth—thanks to the death of water.² Among all the Pre-Socratic philosophers Empedocles became famous for the most detailed elaboration of this conception. He tried to combine all the earlier ideas and

theories of Thales, Anaximander, Heraclitus, Xenophanes and others in one system, and he called the elements “the roots of every being” (*rizomata*),³ that is, *simple homogenous forms of matter* which are fundamental components of the world and bear different qualities.⁴ Earth, water, air and fire seem to represent at the same time four states of matter: solid, liquid, gas and “fiery.”

Aristotle, inspired by Empedocles, derived four elements from prime or primitive matter, but he also added the fifth, more perfect one, ether (*aither*), which he regarded as the material of celestial bodies. The four elements are distinguished from one another by their qualities. The four primary qualities are the fluid (or moist), the dry, the hot, and the cold, and each element possesses two of them. Hot and cold, however, and fluid and dry are contraries and cannot be coupled. Hence the four possible combinations of them in pairs are: hot and dry, assigned to fire; hot and fluid (or moist), assigned to air; cold and fluid, assigned to water; cold and dry, assigned to earth.⁵ In each element, one quality predominates over the other: in earth, dryness; in water, cold; in air, fluidity; in fire, heat. None of the elements is unchangeable; *they may pass into one another* through the medium of that quality which they possess in common.⁶ Aristotle also argues that each and every substance is composed of each and every element. The difference between one substance and another depends on the proportions in which the elements are present. This conception finally led to the idea of *the unity and harmony of the universe*, “one is all, and all is one,” which was brilliantly exposed in alchemic speculations.⁷ European alchemists, who carefully examined the nature of the elementary transmutations, came to a conclusion that if lead and gold each consist of the same elements, we may adjust the proportions of the elements in the dull and common metal to those of the shining, precious one.⁸

In one of the *Upaniṣads* (c. 600 BC), regarded as revelatory scripture in Indian culture, we can find the following sequence of five primordial elements in the description of the initial stages of the process of world creation. It says that from the Self (*ātman*), ether arose (Skr. *ākāśa*); from ether, air; from air, fire; from fire, water; from water, the earth; from the earth, herbs; from the herbs, food; from food, the person who names himself: “I am the Self.”⁹ Thus both the process of the emerging world, i.e., macrocosmic evolution, and the broadening of self-awareness, i.e., microcosmic development, necessarily involve transformations of the elements.

Among the other interesting conceptions of the elements that originated in Indian Brahman philosophy, two seem especially useful and stimulating for

aesthetic analysis. The first one was exposed by Kaṇāda (c. 400 BC) who started one of the six classical systems of Indian philosophy—Vaiśeṣika. In his *Vaiśeṣika-sūtras* he distinguishes nine kinds of substances: earth, water, fire, air, ether, time, space, consciousness (*ātman*), and mind (*manas*). What is interesting is that the five elements (*bhūtas*) constitute not only the material world but also the five senses. Earth possesses the property of smell and constitutes the corresponding sense, the nose. Water possesses the property of taste and constitutes the sense of taste. Fire possesses colours and constitutes the eye. To air are owed the sense of touch and the qualities of touch. To ether are owed the ear and sound.¹⁰

Another Indian conception that I would like to refer to was developed in the classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga schools.¹¹ The original metaphysical distinction, for both schools, is between the Self (*puruṣa*), which is infinite consciousness but indeterminate, and Nature (*prakṛti*), which is infinite unconsciousness, but determinate. Nature is the original stuff of the psychophysical world, and it produces the world out of itself, just manifesting what it already contains. This process of emergence, or transformation (*pariṇāma*), proceeds in several phases: 1) the manifestation of reason, or intellect (*buddhi*) which gives origin to 2) ego (*ahamkāra*); then, from ego, sixteen evolutes emerge: 3a) mind (*manas*) and 3b) and 3c) ten senses (*indriyas*), which should be rather understood as “powers or capacities of the senses,” and 3d) five subtle elements which finally produce 4) the five gross elements. The ten senses are divided in two groups: 3b) five sense-capacities (*buddhīndriya*) including the so-called “eye,” “ear,” “nose,” “tongue,” and “skin”; and (3c) five capacities for action (*karmendriya*) including the so-called “voice,” “hands,” “feet,” and “the organs of excretion and generation.” The five subtle, that is extremely fine, elements (*tan-mātras*) are as follows: “sound,” “touch,” “form” (or “shape”), “taste,” and “smell.” Gauḍapāda, the author of the oldest commentary to *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, simply correlates the five subtle elements with the gross ones. He says that the subtle element “smell” leads to the gross element of earth; taste to water; form to fire; touch to wind; and the sound to space.¹²

The subtle elements in the above scheme are emergents or evolutes of ego, and are placed parallel with the emergence of mind, the five senses, and the five organs of action. They function somewhat like the mind in that they represent a kind of bridge between the internal and external or between the individual and the world. The subtle elements are products of self-awareness, and yet they in turn come in contact with or generate the external world.¹³

Vācaspati Miśra (c. 800 AD), another outstanding Indian philosopher, explains in his commentary to *Yoga-sūtras* the origin of the gross elements showing *their secondary nature in relation to the subtle elements and senses*. He says that the atom of earth is produced by the five fine elements, among which the fine element of odour predominates; likewise the atom of water is produced from the remaining four fine elements, among which the fine element of taste predominates; and the atom of fire is produced from the remaining three fine elements, among which the fine element of colour predominates; the atom of wind, from the two remaining elements, of which the element of touch predominates; and finally, the atom of ether is produced from the fine element of sound alone.¹⁴ Thus, the earth includes all five properties of the subtle elements: It supplies space, movement, light, fluctuation and permanence, which enable, respectively, sound, touch, colour, taste, and odour to be perceived through the sense organs. It can clearly produce all kinds of objects which are able to attract all the senses. This feature makes the element of earth especially powerful and crucial for every perception, including aesthetic appreciation.

And finally let us mention China where, as in India, five elements, namely wood, fire, earth, metal and water were commonly distinguished. The elements were strictly combined with a female-male, *yin-yang* doctrine and correlated with other elementary concepts like the sides of the world, seasons, colours, tastes, emotions and so on. Wood is, for instance, correlated with the East, spring, green, sour and anger; fire with the South, summer, red, bitter and joy; earth with the Middle, all seasons, yellow, sweet and sympathy; metal with the West, autumn, white, acrid and sadness; water with the North, winter, black, salt and fear. The oldest evidence of this idea is dated, according to Joseph Campbell,¹⁵ to the period of the Han dynasty (202 BC—220 AD).¹⁶ The conception of the elements was being developed by the well-known Confucian and Taoist philosophers both.

* * *

To sum up this brief survey of representative conceptions of the elements we should emphasize that even in ancient times there were present two fundamental images of the primeval component. The elements were seen both as: 1) abstract, mythical, or even mystical *primordial cosmic principles* that stand for the cosmic order and are responsible for the maintenance of perfect harmony; and 2) *the simplest materials*, equipped with certain physical and chemical qualities, which undergo continuous transformations and provide the variety and diversity of natural phenomena.

As we can see, behind the majority of mythological, religious and even philosophical conceptions of the elements, there is a presupposition that the nature of the human psycho-physical complex and the nature of the macrocosm are homogenous. As the result of this identification the philosophers exploring inner body-and-mind processes usually expand their conclusions on the cosmological level. The range of cosmic categories is, therefore, the exact reflection of human cognitive abilities and the process of perception “inverts” the process of the creation of the world. Because of the genetic relationship between the senses and the elements, the latter in number and potential to evoke a suitable impression are the exact counterpart of the human perceptual abilities. In other words, only these physical qualities are separated and perceived which can be “grasped” and recorded by one of the senses. Thus, a deeper aesthetic analysis of the relationship: *senses—elements—imagination*,¹⁷ should naturally follow the assumption of equivalence of the sensory powers and the basic ways in which the world manifests itself.

Incidentally on the ground of Western aesthetics only the second part of the relationship has been extensively discussed. Gaston Bachelard, one of the modern French philosophers, made the gross elements the explanatory principle of a creative attitude.¹⁸ He argues that images of the elements, present in the European culture at least since the time of Empedocles, are still able to evoke new artistic visions. A modern man sharing two contrary attitudes, the attitude of the scientist and of the alchemist, operates with discursive knowledge and primitive intuition equally well. The primitive intuition subordinates human creative imagination to just one of the four elements, with one predominating in each particular individual, although three others are also present but inactive.

EARTH—AMONG THE BASIC MOTIFS OF IMAGINATION

Now, I would like to concentrate on the image-creative power of the earth element. The ability to stimulate the archetypal and unconscious layers of our psyche and a strong dynamic and dialectical influence that the earth exerts on human creative imagination is what I call here the “aesthetic potential.”

Inspired by Jungian analysis of the archetypal background of human imagination and by comparative studies of religious symbols presented by Mircea Eliade, Joseph Campbell and Rudolf Otto, we can safely assume that the process of creation consists in bringing to life the immemorial symbols of mankind, symbols which are available to the individual owing to his or her

participation in the collective unconsciousness. And that is why we may expect to trace similar images and metaphors, referring to the essential aspects of human life, in so distant cultures as the Sumerian and Indian, Egyptian and Greek or Meso-American and Chinese, both in ancient and modern times.

As with the other elements, the representations and images of earth can be divided generally into two groups: 1) earth as a physical body, *solid material* or the most fundamental substance; 2) earth as an abstract and *fundamental principle*. The first group embraces images of earth (and the Earth) taken in the literal sense. The stress is put on particular physical or chemical qualities of the earth's substance. In the second group there are comprised all other motifs in which the element of earth is a sort of metaphor related to the whole reality or one of its essential aspects. It goes without saying that the above general distinction between two groups of earth images cannot be satisfactory when we undertake a detailed investigation of the huge variety of symbols and pictures evoked by this element. The method of systematisation, however, should not be too complicated but rather clear and suggestive, to enable us to display the most typical, representative symbolic and iconographic motifs. To demonstrate the immense diversity of symbols and images one should bear in mind all its possible planes of reference: mythological, religious, philosophical, aesthetic and purely sensory. The method applied in the present rough study consists in putting together or comparing and contrasting antinomic and ambiguous examples of the symbolization of earth, which are to show either opposite or complementary aspects and typical motifs connected with earth. For that purpose four pairs of such images can be set forth.

1. *Formless Primordial Element vs. Shaped Celestial Body or Delimited Area*

1.1. The most abstract and seemingly anti-aesthetic image is that of the earth as *fundamental principle* of being (*arché*) or formless material of the world, amorphous substance, featureless mass or stuff. As an example of this image we can indicate, on the philosophical plane, the conception of divine Earth-Gaia whose mythological vision was transformed into *logos* by the Pre-Socratic philosopher of Nature—Xenophanes (c. 570–475 BC). The conception of Empedocles (c. 493–433 BC), so influential in European thought, should be also mentioned here. Similar images can also be found in ancient Chinese and Indian texts, like *The Book of Mountains and Seas*,

Huai-nan-tsy, Mahā-bhārata XII. 183–187, Vaiśeṣika-sūtra, Sāṃkhya-kārikā, and so forth.

Symbolic visualization of this concept usually takes the form of the simplest geometric shapes: Pythagoras associated earth with a *cube*,¹⁹ in Indian tradition earth is generally visualised as a *square*; in the system of notation adopted by the alchemists it is depicted by a *downwards triangle crossed with a horizontal line*. We can also find abstract visualization of earth in modern art: in a film directed by Luc Besson *The Fifth Element* (1997), the element of earth is shown in the form of *five parallel horizontal lines*. Clearly, in all these visual symbols there is included the idea of stability, balance and equanimity, which is commonly evoked by the earth.

1.2. Even more fruitful from the aesthetic point of view is the image of earth which was shaped in the course of the world creation process, or was subjected to intentional rearrangement by a human being. This category includes symbolization of the earth as *disc, circle, globe* or *sphere*. It is a kind of cosmic, out-of-the-world perspective which is usually taken to emphasize the supernatural origin of the earth, or to turn our attention to the creative power of God.

A question of special interest is the image of ritually delimited and distinguished area or *enclosure*. Unlike the previous one, this image implies the intentional activity of man as a creator of culture. Sacralization or consecration of the earth, being a repetition of God's creative act, manifests itself by marking the central point (*axis mundi*), which takes various forms, like pillar, mound, altar or building erected on a central plan (usually circle or square). There are lots of visual representations of the sacral area, not only in primitive art, but also in the sacral architecture of all great religions. The symbols of *Sacred Ground* and *terra repromissionis*, which imply a more passive position of man receiving from God a particular area to make the best use of it, may also be referred to in this context. Moreover, the symbolization of *Eden, paradise*—that is, either the original or ultimate stage of human presence on the Earth—is another important image. One of its further reflections in culture is the *motif of garden*, that being a unique human rearrangement of living nature.

The reverse side of the image described above is the area that was excluded or left outside the “tamed” piece of earth, that is the *profanum*. Symbols of this unfamiliar, unexplored or unknown region of earth (*terra ignota, terra incognita*) express its highly dangerous and threatening power. We can find among them various forms of evil spirits, demons and other terrible beings who are the owners of the strange lands. A typical image of

this kind in Judaism and Christianity is the land of Gog and Magog, in German tradition that of Jöttenheim, and in Buddhism that of Pretaloka.

2. *Primary Source of Life vs. Lethal Energy That Absorbs All Vitality*

The saying “*Earth produces all things and receives all again*” is a precise intuition of this antinomy. As a key for understanding this bipolarity we can point to a Greek myth about Demeter and Kore or Persephone, which is central for the archetype of the Great Mother, a analysed in detail by Carl G. Jung. Here there are opposed, but at the same time presented as complementary, two images extremely important for the aesthetic potential of earth: the images of Mother Earth, who 1) gives all life and food, and, on the other hand, 2) absorbs, receives back to her womb every form of vitality.

2.1. Among the images associated with the first aspect of Mother Earth, that is “*the life-giver*” are *terra mater*, *tellus mater*, the life-giving womb (*matrix*) and rock mother (*petra genitrix*). This particular aspect of earth stands for the symbols of inexhaustible, vital energy and fertility. Earth, understood here as residuum of the life energy, is visualized as the fertile, wet soil and a ploughed furrow or as the Great Mother generously equipped with the signs of maternity. It is enough to mention numerous statues of Mother Earth which are found in all early agrarian cultures, for instance, the Venus of Willendorf or Tlacolteutl, the Aztec goddess of childbirth.²⁰

Another specification of this category is the image of *pregnant earth*. And within this type of symbolization we can distinguish two aspects: 1) the *produce of the earth*, the nourishment, food which supports all living creatures (among the typical symbols of this kind are seeds, tubers, roots or rhizomes); 2) *minerals and precious stones*, especially gold, growing mellow inside the earth (this image is common to the alchemic search for the philosopher’s stone and to hermeticism).

2.2. The examples of the other side of the Mother Earth image—“*receiving back*”—are as follows: *cave*, *cavern*, *grave*, *cemetery* and simply symptoms of death, like the body’s remains. This kind of symbolic representation of the earth expresses the temporality, decay, impermanence that is the inevitable consequence of every form of life. Mother Earth receives to her womb the bodies and souls of the dead. It becomes a refuge for the souls of dead ancestors and an abode of chthonic deities (Gaia, Ceres, Hades). Another image coming under this category is that of barren soil, especially a *desert*. Such a dry, desolate area devoid of life can be the symbol of fearful and terrible existential loneliness. However, it can be as well a perfect place

(*interiora deserti*) for a spiritual retreat, meditation and the direct mystical experience of God.

3. *The Earth's Surface in Its Diversity vs. Its Interior or Subterranean Realm*

3.1. There are two main aspects of the first image: 1) a soft, wet surface and 2) a hard, rocky surface. The soft, swampy or *muddy ground*, or even a marsh, means effort, endeavour, trouble and danger or decline and death of all kinds. Whereas a hard, solid surface or *stone, diamond, crystal* denotes the core of life, absolute reality or sacredness and besides, the principle of stability, immutability.

3.2. The image of the subterranean implies a dangerous and unpredictable power hidden inside the body of earth, which is often associated with *hell* or the inferno. This interior region of earth is *the seat of infernal powers* and darkness but also of violent and destructive force of a volcanic nature. This aspect is usually visualized as a volcanic eruption, lava flow or an earthquake. Moreover, there is a numerous group of animal chthonic symbols connected with this aspect of earth: *snakes*, like the Indian Nāga and Nāgīni, who are guardians of the treasure hidden under the earth's surface and symbolize the transformation of time; the guardians of Land of Death are also *dogs* or *jackals*, while *frogs* or *toads* stand for the process of Nature's regeneration but also a sin and moral foulness.

4. *Earth as the Source of Tactile Experiences vs. Source of Olfactory Experiences*

4.1 This pair of motifs deals with strictly sensual aspects of the earth image-creative potential. Shaping the matter of earth and actualizing its aesthetic potentialities is exactly what a sculptor does. The *tactile properties* of the created form, like smooth or rough, soft or hard, warm or cold, and so forth influence aesthetic feelings and impressions. A separate question is the symbolic dimension of the material used during the process of creation, namely, clay, stone, marble, bronze or cotton and glass, or even light, which is the case with virtual reality.

4.2. Besides visual and tactile experiences one should not neglect *acquaintance with small* (or retrospection on them) which is also able to deliver truly aesthetic satisfaction. We can find many examples of such motifs, especially in poetry.

The method of analysis applied above aimed only at arranging an initial setting in order of the question under discussion. However, this arrangement and confrontation of selected aspects of the aesthetics of earth does not aspire to be fully exhaustive. There are presumably more opposed aspects which can be pointed out in the creative processes involving the element of earth, but the purpose of the present paper was to pay attention to the most typical and representative bipolarities and to detect dialectical tensions between the complementary poles.

*Institute of Cultural Studies,
Silesian University, Poland*

NOTES

¹ Cf. H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Dublin–Zürich: 1966–1967), frg. A 10, 27, 29 and ff.

² Cf. H. Diels, op. cit., frg. B 76.

³ Cf. H. Diels, op. cit., frg. B 17, 21–23, 38.

⁴ It is worth mentioning that the same set of elements can be found in Aztec mythology where air, fire, water and earth cooperate in the course of subsequent creative and destructive cosmic transformations. Particular elements dominate each world epoch, coming one after another and play an important role in the Mexican astrology. Cf. for instance *Teogonia e Historia de los Mexicanos. Tres opusculos del siglo XVI* (Mexico City: 1973).

⁵ Cf. H. Diels, op. cit., Aristotle, *Meteorology*, frg. 339a 12–17.

⁶ Similar intuitions were expressed by Plato; he stressed in *Timaeus* that the ability to transform one element into another represents the impossibility of ascribing fixed characteristics to a particular element. When what is called water is frozen it becomes more similar to a stone or earth; when it melts, it becomes more like wind or air; when it burns, fire. The same phenomena can be seen in observing other elements. Cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, frg. 49c–e.

⁷ Cf. J. Ruska, *Tabula Smaragdina. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der hermetischen Literatur* (Heidelberg: 1926); or W. Shumaker, *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance. A Study in Intellectual Patterns* (Berkeley–Los Angeles–London: University of California Press, 1972).

⁸ On the history of alchemic ideas and their connections with ancient conceptions of the elements, see E.J. Holmyard, *Alchemy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1957).

⁹ *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* II. 1–4; cf. *The Principal Upaniṣads*, ed. and trans. Servapali Radhakrishnan (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1953), pp. 542–545.

¹⁰ See P. T. Raju, *The Philosophical Traditions of India* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992), p. 144.

¹¹ The oldest treatises of these schools are dated back to about 200 AD—Patañjali's *Yogasūtras*, and about 450 AD—*Sāṃkhya-kārikā* by Īśvarakṛṣṇa.

¹² See Gauḍapāda's *Bhāṣya on kārikā* 38, translated by Gerald J. Larson, *Classical Sāṃkhya. An Interpretation of its History and Meaning* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979), p. 188.

¹³ See G. J. Larson, op.cit.

¹⁴ Vācaspati Mīśra, *Tattvavaiśaradī* 1.44; cf. *The Yoga-System of Patañjali*, translated by J. H. Wood (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1988), pp. 89–90.

- ¹⁵ J. Campbell, *The Masks of God. Oriental Mythology* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), Vol. II, p. 430ff.
- ¹⁶ According to Chinese legends the doctrine of five elements emerged in China during the reign of the ancient king Chi (c. 2200 BC). He maintained that there is only one eternal and primordial principle Tao (*dao*) which in motion manifests itself as *yang* energy, while at rest as *yin*. Both powers when joined together create the five elements.
- ¹⁷ The fundamental importance of the sensory sphere for aesthetics as a separate discipline is clearly signaled by the term itself; Gr. *aisthetikós*—"referring to sensual perception." Cf. A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica* (Frankfurt: 1750–58).
- ¹⁸ See G. Bachelard, *La Terre et les rêveries de la volonté*, (Paris: Libraire José Corti, 1948) and G. Bachelard, *La Terre et les rêveries du repos*, (Paris: Libraire José Corti, 1948).
- ¹⁹ The same figure is associated with earth in Buddhist tradition; in one of the meditation stages (*śamatha*), consisting of visualising the elements, the earth is perceived as a golden cube.
- ²⁰ For numerous examples of this kind of earth visualization, see Adele Getty, *Goddess. Mother of Living Nature*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1990).

REFERENCES

- Bachelard, G. *La Terre et les rêveries de la volonté*. Paris: Libraire José Corti, 1948.
- Bachelard, G. *La Terre et les rêveries du repos*. Paris: Libraire José Corti, 1948.
- Baumgarten, A. G. *Aesthetica*. Frankfurt: 1750–58.
- Campbell, J. *The Masks of God*. New York: Penguin Books, 1976. Vol. I–IV.
- Diels, H. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Dublin—Zürich: 1966–1967.
- Getty, A. *Goddess. Mother of Living Nature*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1990.
- Holmyard, E. J. *Alchemy*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1957.
- Larson, G. J. *Classical Sāṃkhya. An Interpretation of its History and Meaning*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979.
- Radhakrishnan, S. (ed. and trans.). *The Principal Upaniṣads*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1953.
- Raju, P. T. *The Philosophical Traditions of India*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992.
- Ruska, J. *Tabula Smaragdina*. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der hermetischen Literatur. Heidelberg: 1926.
- Shumaker, W. *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance. A Study in Intellectual Patterns*. Berkeley–Los Angeles–London: University of California Press, 1972.
- Teogonía e Historia de los Mexicanos. Tres opusculos del siglo XVI*. Mexico City: 1973.
- Wood, J. H. (trans.). *The Yoga-System of Patañjali*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1988.